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ABSTRACT

This paper, which presents some ideas about establishing a consortium of institutes for development and research in Europe, is aimed at institute management personnel and was written especially for a meeting in The Hague, the Netherlands, in December 1989. The word "consortium" expresses organizers' view that institutes can profit from each others' work and can attain common goals through cooperation. Institutes can use each others' products such as curriculum materials, procedures and approaches, information and documentation, and staff training facilities. The proposed consortium's core function is to bring together expertise, experience, results, and know-how concerning educational improvement through research and development. After providing some background information, the paper discusses feasibility issues and the need to develop a formula embracing intended aims, forecasted problems, financing possibilities, and ways to encourage institutional participation. Responsibilities of the proposed council, executive committee, and advisory committees are detailed, as well as the consortium's role in expanding relationships with existing networks, programs, and international organizations. Ideally, the consortium should remain independent of these international organizations while establishing good working relationships with program managers. Finally, important practical issues are discussed concerning membership eligibility, funds and operating expenses, communication and language choices, decision-making procedures, and consortium name and status. (MLH)

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European consortium of institutes for development and research in education

Discussion paper for a starting meeting on 15 and 16 December 1989 in The Hague, the Netherlands

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EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM OF INSTITUTES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

Discussion paper for a starting meeting on

15 and 16 December 1989 in The Hague, the Netherlands

CONTENT

Introduction 3

1. The core of the idea 4

2. Background of the idea 6

3. How to reach the aims of the consortium idea? 8

4. Relationships with existing networks, programmes and international organisations 12

5. Important practical issues 15

6. Feasibility 20

7. How to proceed? 21

Concluding remarks 23

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents some ideas about the establishment of a consortium of institutes for development and research in Europe. It is a discussion paper aimed at people holding management positions at such institutes and written especially for the meeting in The Hague, the Netherlands, in December 1989. Three persons have taken the initiative in developing ideas and approaching people in various European countries to assess the feasibility of setting up such a consortium. The following three people are responsible for this paper:

- Mr. Piet A. de Bruijne, director of the Dutch National Institute for Curriculum Development SLO
- Drs. Johan C. van Bruggen, deputy director of the Dutch National Institute for Curriculum Development SLO
- Dr. Hans G.L.C. Lodewijks, director of the Dutch National Institute for Educational Research SVO.

The paper describes the idea as such (paragraph 2 and 3) in terms of examples, aims and functions. It also deals with several practical problems like programming, management, organisation and finance.
The paper does not have any kind of official status. Its only function is to facilitate discussion (December 1989) and commentary.
This is also the reason that we did not have the intention to write a short paper but tried to identify points for discussion, to describe these points and to give ideas for consideration.

1. THE CORE OF THE IDEA

A consortium is an organisational structure that is more than a network of contacts and possibilities for exchanging information. The word "consortium" expresses our view that institutes can profit from each other's work and can attain common goals through co-operation. More specifically:

1.1 Use of products

In spite of the cultural diversity across European countries, the independence of educational policies and the difficulties involved in "exporting" the results of educational development work and research to other countries, we believe that it is possible for institutes to use each other's results. Drafts of curricular materials that have been developed in one country, could be used in another by elaborating and translating them. Also, research findings from other countries in a particular educational area could be taken into account in national studies and adapted to national situations. The same could be done with methods and instruments for educational development and research, such as curriculum research methods, procedures, tests, assessment methods, etc.

1.2 Use of procedures and approaches

Several institutes have developed approaches in educational research and development which can be exchanged and adapted for use in other countries, so that these countries will not have to develop their own procedures from the start. This could also improve the quality of the professional debate about educational research and development.

1.3 Use of information

The quality of the work can also be improved by a more efficient use of the information and documentation available in the various institutes and countries. In addition, the consortium can function as a platform for exchanging information about programmes and projects carried out by the participating countries and international agencies.

1.4 Training of staff

The consortium can improve the quality of the work carried out by the participating institutes by exploring possibilities for training staff with the use of each other's facilities. Such possibilities might include: exchange programmes for staff members (perhaps with the help of existing programmes developed by the European Commission), workshops for staff members working in the same field of research or development, consultancy visits, correspondence, short study visits, electronic mail, etc.

1.5 Partners for agencies

The consortium can serve as a co-ordination platform for contacts between the institutes and international organisations for information exchange, international projects, funds. It can serve specific [illegible] an umbrella for projects with a special purpose at the European level (e.g. European dimension in curricula for some subjects, migrants). The consortium can also serve as a consultation platform for international projects like the work of IEA; some Unesco projects or OECD projects.

So, the core function of the proposed consortium is to bring expertise, experience, results and know how together, concerning improvement of education through research and development. This in order to raise the quality of the work in the institutes. This research and development tries to contribute to the work in schools and other educational agencies. The consortium tries to realize this accumulation of expertise etc. mainly from the point of view of effectiveness and efficiency. There is a common background in the belief that education in Europe is so important that it deserves the best possible research and development.

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2. BACKGROUND OF THE IDEA

2.1 Contacts as a source

During study visits and international conferences in the past six years, we have had the opportunity to talk with staff members and directors of institutes for curriculum development and educational research in various countries, especially in Western Europe. On our part, we have received visitors from various foreign institutions and agencies. During conferences of a more general nature, we have established contacts with several organisations of subject teachers, for instance of mathematics, science, social studies, languages. We have also participated in some more general conferences hosted by AERA, OECD, Unesco, EARLI (European Association for Research in Learning and Instruction), Council of Europe, the European Commission, and the European Forum on Educational Administration. Of course, we don't have a complete picture.

2.2 Reflections

These contacts, which were followed up and expanded by exchanging materials and information, have shown that these insititutes know little about each other's work, about the comparability of approaches in curriculum development and research and about the similarity of research results and products of developmental work. We are impressed by the apparent possibilities for using the results of work carried out by individual institutes in other countries. Of course, these products will have to be translated and adapted, but it seems obvious that lots of time and energy and, in consequence, money can thus be saved. Training of staff could be co-ordinated. New research and development could be started, based on co-operation. We believe that this pragmatic consideration alone justifies an investigation into the feasibility of setting up a consortium, as described in paragraph 1. Of course, there are also ideological considerations with regard to international co-operation and exchange, especially in view of Europe after 1992.

2.3 Examples

In order to give a better idea of what is proposed in paragraph 2.2 we shall now present some examples which illustrate the aims of the consortium, as we begin to see these:

a. In the past few years SLO staff members have developed a piece of interactive courseware which enables young primary school pupils (8 years old) to master multiplication problems and to memorize multiplication tables. Towards the completion of the development process we visited the INRP in Paris and learned that staff members there were doing exactly the same thing for division and the memorization of division tables. The didactic approach and the ideas about mathematics education underlying the two projects were 90% similar. Obviously, it would be profitable for both parties to translate each other's courseware and adjust it to their own computer systems.
b. At the Landesinstitut für Schule und Weiterbildung in Northrheinland Westphalia (FRG) we found a fine piece of work for religious education of Islamic children which had been achieved in co-operation with experts from the universities of Cairo and Ankara and written down in

a document with a curriculum proposal and a textbook. It was immediately obvious that the SLO could use this work for the same target group in the Netherlands. At the moment we are finishing the preparation of the elaboration of this piece of work. Thus, the SLO is able to save a great deal of money which may be deployed for development work in other areas.

c. Several European countries have conducted studies of the way in which schools develop their school work plans. Instances that come to mind are: the school-based evaluation in the United Kingdom, research into the development of local school plans commissioned by the Swedish NBE, and similar studies conducted in the Netherlands. We think that much of the research could have been exchanged and that in that way the institutes involved could have profited from each other's work.
d. In January 1989 the Landesinstitut für Schule und Weiterbildung of Northrheinland Westphalia, the Hessisches Institut für Bildung und Schule (HIBS) and the SLO hosted a meeting of about 60 developers, consultants and trainers in the domain of minority languages (Arab, Turkish, Greek, Spanish, etc.). The aim was not only to exchange experiences and materials, but especially to discuss the definition of the cultural component of this type of language teaching.
e. Several countries are building a system of national assessment of educational achievement with long-term programmes. The work of the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU) in the United Kingdom (linked up with the work of the National Foundation for Educational Research) is well-known. But in Sweden (NBE), in the Netherlands (CITO, commissioned by SVO and in co-operation with the SLO) and in France (Sprese) the same type of developmental work is being done. We have noticed that, with some adjustments, it is possible to use the results of this work (tests, observation schemes, etc.) in other countries as well. Co-operation could thus save a lot of energy. And of course this work may be linked up with new programmes of the IEA.
f. In co-operation with other agencies, the Institut für die Pädagogik der Naturwissenschaften in Kiel has developed a programme for the use of computers in special education. We think that the materials developed in this programme could very well be used in other countries. A start has just been made in the Netherlands.
g. In several countries the issue of values education is gaining importance. Some universities (Fribourg in Switzerland, Konstanz in FRG, Nijmegen in the Netherlands and probably some more) are conducting studies in this field that are based on similar ideas about values education. Research methods, observation formats and tests could probably be used in several countries and the connection with curriculum development could be made.

These examples probably illustrate our thinking. We could also give some examples about vocational profiles, information technology, attainment targets for general education, reseach of teacher thinking related to the use of curricular materials etc.
It will probably be useful to gather more examples based on other experiences than ours. An elaboration of examples and possibilities can help us in establishing the consortium, especially if we analyse them in relation to the possible functions of the consortium.

3 HOW TO REACH THE AIMS OF THE CONSORTIUM IDEA?

3.1 Feasibility of the idea

We feel that the first step has to be the formation of a group of well-informed people who are familiar with the work currently carried out in several European countries.
This group has to make an assessment of the ideas about:
- co-operation in research and development;
- co-operation in training staff;
- developing ideas for new projects, in which co-operation of researchers and developers from various countries bring in an extra perspective and profit through international exchange and co-operation;
- possibilities to strenghten the mutual connection between research and development.

The situation concerning the organisation of educational research and development in various countries is rather different. But everywhere the need for stronger networking and co-ordination is felt. International co-operation could stimulate this networking within and between countries. Especially where the development of curricular materials of all levels and types are concerned (proposals for ministries or other authorities, guidelines, examples, teaching and learning packages) in connection with basic research and formative evaluation. The group should assess if there are indeed enough common factors (approaches, problems, findings, products) to make cross-border co-operation and co-ordination profitable. We are convinced that this is the case, but we feel strongly that other colleagues should see for themselves whether or not we are right. This is the main reason why we have taken the initiative in establishing many contacts and, on the basis of a provisional assessment, organising the meeting in December 1989.

3.2 Elaboration of the formula

If the result of the assessment is positive, we will have to develop a formula for the consortium which comprises a balance of its intended aims (see paragraph 1.), as well as a forecast of the problems that have to be overcome and the possibilities for investing time, energy and money. Special attention has to be given to the point of autonomy of participating institutes; an autonomy that has to be served by the co-operation within the consortium and which cannot be restricted. Special attention should also be given to the way in which managers, staff members, boards of directors, heads of departments and authorities could be made enthousiastic. The possibilities of drawing on the know-how and resources (fundraising, facilities, attachment to programmes) of international organisations, such as the European Commission, OECD, Council of Europe, Unesco must be investigated as well as relations with national ministries and international professional organisations. In the following paragraphs we shall present the main elements of the formula that we consider feasible. These ideas are intended for discussion at the meeting in December 1989.

3.3 Main elements of the formula

3.3.1 Executive committee

An executive committee will be set up, consisting of about 5-15 people of the institutes involved, who are well acquainted with the developments in their institute and country. The chief task of this committee will be to examine the problems, projects, approaches, and results which may form a basis for an approach that fits the aims of the consortium, which can help to realize the function of the consortium and which are manageable without interfering with the daily work of the institutes. In our view, the selection of approaches and projects should be limited to those that have more than regional or national significance and that have a certain critical mass in terms of time, money and manpower investment. We also think that priority should be given to those possible projects of co-operation (in research and development, training, information exchange) which strenghten the liaison between research and development in various ways. This investigation of the executive committee is to result in a proposal to the board, in which representatives of all participating institutes have a say. The proposal must offer several alternatives for activities as well as a provisional estimation of the feasibility of the proposed activities and an indication of the institutes that could be teamed up to do the work.

3.3.2 Council

A council will be installed to decide about:

- Some four or five new research and development activities that are started every year in order to effectuate the function of the consortium; perhaps less than four for the first few years.
- The deployment of the consortium's funds for these activities and the resources to be invested by the participating institutes (because they gain profit from the work carried out in the context of the consortium, while doing their regular work at the same time).
- The outlines of programmes for information exchange and training of staff.

The council could meet once a year for about two days. This meeting should in part be devoted to a general exchange of information about: possible research and development projects in coming years, training needs of staff members of the institutes, and products and projects that are approaching their deadlines. Another important point on the agenda of this meeting should be the exchange of information about relevant educational developments in the participating countries. The council meeting, then, also has a function in itself as a platform for exchanging information.

3.3.3 Executive committee: other tasks

The executive committee must also execute the decisions of the council:

- The committee takes initiatives for the implementation of the programme of the consortium. This means for instance that an agreement is made with a particular institute which takes the lead in a scheduled activity. It also means that some insitutes (2-5) have to be approached in order to see if a critical mass of participation can be realized (of course some of this work can be prepared informally during the council meeting). The committee has then to allocate funds for the new activity, to be undertaken by the institute that takes the lead. This institute draws up action plans in close co-operation with one or two members of the executive committee. (The consortium could be defined as a network of networks, but with a planned production function.)

- Secondly, the executive committee has to offer advice to the group of institutes that are involved in the scheduled activity and it has to try to co-ordinate this activity with other developments within and, if possible, outside the consortium.
- Thirdly, the committee has to strive for co-ordination with other programmes of the consortium (training, information, conferences) and with programmes of international organisations that are suitable for networking.
- The executive committee also has to take initiatives in effectuating the other functions of the consortium: information exchange and training of staff. And of course it has to compile an annual report, to be submitted to the council, about developments, results, problems, and the allocation of resources.
- From the start a simple newsletter has to inform people (management and staff).

3.3.4 Relations with international agencies

In our opinion it is very important that the consortium should be open to co-operation with existing networks and programmes of internatonal organisations and associations. Therefore the members of the council and the executive committee will have to screen the programmes of international organisations (Unesco, International Bureau of Education, Unesco Institute in Hamburg, OECD, European Commission, Council of Europe) as well as the activitites of professional associations (conferences, liasons, networks). They must strive for co-operation and, if possible, co-ordination. This can be realized by organising activities in co-operation with those associations, or by setting other priorities etc. (see paragraph 4). It is of vital importance that the executive committee should try to inform itself about as many developments and programmes and organisations as possible.

3.3.5 Advisory committees

The consortium will need some advisory committees, although these need not be operative right from the start. We are thinking of the following ones:

- A committee that prepares proposals for the general research and development programme. The executive committee reviews these proposals to prepare the meeting of the council.
- An advisory committee that concerns itself with the exchange function of the consortium (e.g. through newsletters, electronic mail, exchange of documentation via the computer and correspondence networks, a directory of relevant persons -staff members of institutes, directors- and their fields of activity). This committee should develop ideas, activities and proposals; consider financial and organisational affairs and formulate proposals for the executive committee.
- An advisory committee that deals with the training function of the consortium, developing proposals for training in the area of research methods and strategies and instruments for curriculum development. This work, of course, must be co-ordinated with the work of outside agencies.

3.3.6 Evaluation

The consortium itself should be assessed regularly, perhaps by "outsiders" (a university working party?), but in any case by "insiders", for instance by an evaluation committee within the council, separate from the executive committee. This can probably wait until the consortium has some years of experience.

3.3.7 Scope in the starting period

We see three different streams of action in the consortium:
- projects of research and development in which co-operation between some institutes is realised;
- training activities for staff;
- information exchange activities.

Of course the three types could and should be linked to each other.
In 3.3.2 we mentioned that each year 4 or 5 projects (the first stream) could start. The same could be true for the two other streams. But: much depends on possibilities (money, time, energy) and opportunities.
Although in our opinion the formula for the consortium is only useful if not too few activities are realised.

4. RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXISTING NETWORKS, PROGRAMMES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

4.1 Introduction

In this paragraph we shall be particularly concerned with the programmes of international organisations. We shall not pay a great deal of attention to professional associations for specific school subjects or specific domains of research, because several staff members of institutes are already taking part in the activities of these associations. This does not mean, however, that we do not consider co-ordination with these associations important!

In the last few years the European Commission has developed a number of initiatives (information technology, vocational training, European dimension, the LINGUA project). It must be possible to link the activities of the consortium up with these (and future) programmes of the European Commission. Perhaps a link could be established with the secretariat of the European Commission. Some programmes of the European Commission could be "used" to foster the consortium's activities in the field of information exchange and training of staff.

The relationship with Unesco and with the IBE and UIE (documentation and information) should be carefully scrutinized. Moreover, Unesco has launched some environmental projects and projects concerned with the transition from school to work. Connections with these projects should be established (co-ordination, finances, linking pin organisations).

In 1987 OECD/CERI launched the project "The Curriculum Redefined", which includes activities in fields such as science/mathematics/technology, humanities, core curriculum, evaluation and assessment, and learning to think. In coming years it may possible to participate in these activities or to improve their co-ordination with work of institutes which take part in the consortium. Also of interest are an environmental project of OECD, in which some institutes are taking part, and the Indicators project, in which several elements of assessment are linked up to the IEA. The Council of Europe has some language development programmes and in-service teacher training programmes (e.g., in the field of political education). Finally, the IEA, in which several European countries are participating, is currently conduction a "reading literacy" project. In the context of this project it could be useful to co-ordinate some parts of the national assessment programmes.
The consortium should not replace initiatives of the international organisations, but on the other hand it has the possibility to do its own programming.

4.2 The consortium: an independent partner

In the next three points we discuss in more detail a possible position of the consortium in relation to the various international organisations, because we think this position is an important point. At first we want to underline that in our opinion the consortium should not try to oversee all developments and programmes or to try to establish as much co-ordination as possible. That should be too big an investment of time and energy which is not necessary. Priorities linked to the programme of the consortium itself have to be set. Relationships, consultations etc. should remain manageable!

In our view, the consortium should be independent from these international organisations. However, it should establish good relations with the people in charge of the programmes of these organisations and strive for information exchange, co-operation, co-ordination and participation in the activities of these organisations; in some cases the consortium should share in their resources. In fact, some activities of the consortium might well be channeled through the programmes of these international organisations. We have already mentioned programmes of the consortium for training staff in various areas, e.g. the use of computers in curriculum development and curriculum research (cf. COMETT of the European Commission). One could also think of the activities of SBI Munich, NCC York, SLO Enschede in the field of core curricula, which could lead to exchange of information, approaches and materials. In this context, a link with the core curriculum programme of OECD/CERI is very well conceivable.

Some activities of a subgroup of institutes could be wholly or partly financed by international organisations. Thus the consortium acts like a construction company. The profit for the international organisations lies in the fact that the "overviewing" function of the consortium gives them a more systematic access to the world of research and development as it is organised in specialized institutes in several countries.

Most member institutes maintain good relations with their governments, which facilitates information exchange and co-ordination of activities.

The consortium should not be a substitute for the initiatives of the international organisations; it should try to optimise the co-ordination of such initiatives. Also, it should not be attached too strongly to any one of these international organisations, because that might make it difficult for some European countries to join the consortium. Some of the consortium's activities may be conducted under the umbrella of one organisation, but this does not mean that the consortium as such is placed under that umbrella.

4.3 First contacts

National institutes for curriculum development or research are already taking part in international projects, e.g. the OECD project "The Curriculum Redefined" and a number of projects of the European Commission. However, this participation is concerned with information exchange rather than co-ordination of activities in the sense in which we have described it.

In our contacts with colleagues we have learned that most of them consider the consortium a good idea; that it has a sound philosophy behind it, but that it should not take the place of the direct relationships of institutes with international organisations. Instead, they say, co-operation could be fostered. General talks with officers of the OECD, the Council of Europe and the European Commission revealed that they are of the same opinion. These were no offical talks, however. We had a chance to discuss the consortium in some detail with the staff of Unesco Paris. Their reaction was very positive. In fact, Unesco has already invested in a consortium of institutes and university groups in the south and south/east of Europe. Unesco could probably help with the organisation, facilities, the secretariat, and perhaps with finances, if it is possible to establish a link with their medium-term plan. Also, the

facilities of IBE en UIE could be used. The consortium first needs to have some kind of formal status as a whole, if Unesco is to take the consortium as such really seriously, not just viewing it as a group of institutes. Requests of the consortium for help and co-operation must be submitted to Unesco directly through the national Unesco committees and/or governmental channels.

4.4. Status

Further discussion and consultations will be needed in order to clarify several points. In that further elaboration attention should be given to the status of the consortium. Its main three streams of activities can be linked rather loosely, based on mutual agreements. For communication with international organisations a more formal status might be necessary (an association?). It will probably be advisable to ask legal advice; also for the regulations within the consortium itself.

5. IMPORTANT PRACTICAL ISSUES

In the preceding paragraphs we have tried to describe the idea of the consortium as a "home" for smaller networks, intended to promote practical co-operation between institutes. The consortium is an instrument for facilitating and improving of the work of the member institutes. It is not our intention to have the consortium organise general conferences about broad topics, as do associations or organisations such as AERA, Unesco, EC, the conference of the directors of research institutes (of the European Council), EFEA and OECD, although these conferences sometimes provide an excellent opportunity for people to meet and exchange information and views. We do not want the consortium to develop into a new bureaucracy with a new international organisation, an expanding secretariat and high overhead costs. Of course, there will have to be a small facility to prepare meetings, to operate the networks and other elements of the programme and to store and use information about programmes of member institutes and of international organisations. On the basis of these ideas we shall try to describe some approaches to practical issues that have to be decided upon if the consortium appears to be feasible.

5.1 Membership

We think that only institutes, ministries of education, university departments, etc. should be eligible for membership, not individual persons. Members should have a broad regional or national working area, e.g. a Land (FRG), Academie (France), a Regional Examination Board (UK), a Lan (Sweden) with a county office and people working in development and research, a Province (Spain).

A second condition is that members should have so much capacity in terms of budget and staff, that they can afford to invest in international contacts and co-operation (because, as we have learned well in recent years, this type of co-operation only pays dividends after some investments have been made). It is difficult to give a definition of the "critical mass" that should be present. It should be clear, however, that participation is not just expressed by the membership fee, but also by a minimum amount of manpower (directors and staff) that will be invested in the consortium. For example: members must take part in at least two of the consortium's activitites and invest in time a minimum of eight days per member. All member institutes should be prepared to participate in the "overheadwork" in council, executive committee and/or advisory committees.

The sort of members we are thinking of are of course the national institutes for curriculum development and/or research (NCC, NBE, SLO, IPN, INRP, the Boards for Secondary and Primary Education in Norway, Landesinstitute in Germany FR, ministries of education of some countries, perhaps in combination with institutes: France, Spain, Austria, Italy). We are also thinking of institutes for educational research or co-ordination of educational research (NBE, CIDE-Spain, NFER-UK, SVO, Institute for Education in Denmark, the larger university institutes for educational research) and institutes for educational measurement: CITO (Netherlands), NBE, APU (UK), Sprese (France), sometimes in connection with the ministry of education (Sprese and APU).

5.2 Funds/operating

5.2.1 Overhead
The general overhead must finance: meetings of the council and the executive committee (perhaps it could be decided that the institutes themselves pay for travel expenses, because there has to be a certain rule that in the long run each institute has to take the burden of these meetings in terms of time and travel). We estimate the expenses for committee meetings etc. at $20,000.

5.2.2 Preparatory work
Funds will be needed for in-depth investigations as to the feasibility of specific co-ordinating activities the consortium might want to undertake. This will generally be after the council has decided to start such an activity and in some cases before that decision has been taken. Such investigations will probably mean about two months of work for one senior staff member of one of the institutes which is going to participate in the activity. These two months should be paid for by the consortium and not by the institute, because the investigation is for the common good. We expect that there will be about four investigations of this kind per year: $ 40,000.

5.2.3 Contacts
There are some travel expenses involved in maintaining contacts with international organisations (only for members of the executive committee): approximately $ 5,000 per year.

5.2.4 Operating costs
Postal, telephone, telefax expenses etc. are to be paid for by the members themselves.

5.2.5 Workshops etc.
The costs of workshops in which small groups of institutes co-operate (i.e. the realization of the ultimate function of the consortium):
- Time of participating staff: the participating institutes.
- Travel expenses of participating staff: participating institutes.
- Housing during the workshop: perhaps at the houses of colleagues of the host institute, or in hotels or a conference building (costs shared by the consortium and the institutes). Occasionally, the consortium might draw on international funds for a specific topic, if it links up with the programme of an international organisation.

5.2.6 Information exchange
Information expenses (newsletters, electronic mail, directory, etc.). Electronic mail has to be paid for by the members themselves; the remaining expenses are estimated at $ 5,000.

5.2.7 Secretariat: see below

5.2.8 Raising funds
How to raise the needed funds? The estimated expenses are $ 70,000 plus the secretariat (estimation: $ 250,000). We are thinking of a membership fee of about $ 15,000; ten members bring in $ 150,000. Furthermore the consortium could apply for a "venture capital subsidy" from governments, foundations and international organisations during its starting years. Above all, however, the member institutes have to commit themselves seriously in terms of manpower investment and membership fee. We have

found that raising funds for the purpose of the consortium can only succeed with the help of a clear-cut programme of activities which among other things shows that we do not want to establish an international organisation as such, but an instrumental organisation for the improvement of the work of the member institutes. We must show that the institutes themselves are convinced of the value of this co-operation. This point will have to be thoroughly discussed during the December meeting. In this discussion we have to consider points as:
- Is it possible and desirable to try to find support from companies (sponsering?).
- It is possible to pay a higher membership fee?
- It is possible that one member or some members cover the secretariat for about five years in order to make a start?

5.3 Communication; languages

Communication by means of telephone, telefax, letters, or an electronic network between staff of member institutes can be arranged by the members themselves. The choice of language will depend on the capabilities of the people who participate in that piece of communication.

The exchange of written material is a matter of the participating staff members. However, the consortium might encourage the institutes to invest in English-language publications. In any case publications could have appended summaries in English.

In the executive committee, the advisory committees and the council the language of communication is English. If absolutely necessary reports of meetings etc. could be summarized in other languages, particularly French, but it would be very time-consuming to do so regularly. General correspondence between the executive committee, members and reviewers should be in English. During workshops and seminars etc. English is the language of communication. If possible, staff members may help to translate or provide summaries in other languages. In the case of special projects, simultaneous interpretation facilities may be arranged if funds can be obtained outside the consortium (e.g., from EC or Unesco or OECD). There are also possibilities to organise workshops on the premises of these organisations.

5.4 Secretariat

A small, but highly competent secretariat is needed to:
- Gather and analyse information (from documents of the member institutes such as working plans and budgets; from direct contacts with staff of the institutes and so on).
- Prepare the meetings of the council and the executive committee and in some cases also of the advisory committees.
- Prepare the directory and provide other assistance in communcation and information exchange.
- Assist in the organisation of workshops, training seminars etc.; especially to set and keep the organisation in motion until the moment when the organising institute takes over.

The primary function of the secretariat is to assist the executive committee and the council; a further task is to provide assistance in the organisation of workshops, training seminars, information exchange and the meetings of the advisory committees. We believe that it takes one

professional secretary to do this work. This person will have to be well acquainted with educational research, curriculum development and international work (languages!) and must have good managerial qualities. Two assistants for clerical work and documentation should be sufficient. We estimate the costs of the secretariat (operating expenses included) at $ 250,000 per year; maybe less during the first few years of the consortium's life, but a start with enough possibilities seems important.

The location of the secretariat is another problem. There are several solutions. It could be attached to the institute of the chairman for a period of four years; it could be connected permanently to one of the member institutes; or it could be located at one of the international organisations.

We propose that during the initial period (about four years) the secretariat should be connected to the chairman or the elected secretary of the executive committee. One year before the end of this period, a more definitive decision will have to be taken. This implies that a secretary must be hired for a contract period of four years, which might mean that he or she should already have a position at one of the member institutes (it is unlikely that a highly qualified secretary will take the job on the basis of just four-year contract).

5.5 The decision-making process

Several practical matters about the statute of the consortium will have to be solved (election of chairman, secretary, treasurer; periods between elections; procedures for meetings; etc.). It must be possible to settle these matters in consultation.

More important at the moment are the council's decision making procedures with regard to the consortium's programme and budget. We propose that these policy decisions should be taken with a two thirds majority, each member having one vote. In the executive committee we should try to achieve consensus, but we should also accept as a rule that decisions based on voting must have a two thirds majority.

Between the meetings of the executive committee, the chairman, together with the elected secretary and the treasurer are allowed to take decisions about every-day operations, with a monthly written report (by the secretary) to be submitted to the council and the executive committee.

5.6 Status; name

A further investigation of such matters as status and position and especially of the legal position in the member countries is needed. As said earlier, we think that a legal position in terms of an official association or foundation is necessary. Furthermore, the consortium should seek non-governmental status by Unesco; Unesco is in our opinion the most suitable organisation to give this "shelter", since other organisations are more or less associated with some political or economic block. We do not want to exclude any eastern or western European country from membership.

Some suggestions for names that might be considered:

a. CIDREE: Consortium of Institutes for Development and Research in Education in Europe;
b. CIERDE: Consortium of Institutes for Educational Research and Development in Europe;
c. EAIERD: European Association of Institutes for Educational Research and Development;
d. ENERDI: European Network of Educational Research and Development Institutes.

We prefer CIDREE; we like to have the word "consortium" in the name and besides the acronym in easily pronouncable in several languages. Of course, we are open to other ideas.

6. FEASIBILITY

As indicated earlier, we have had a lot of contacts and talks with people from several institutes. The following institutes are seriously interested in participating in the consortium:

- INRP - Paris - J. Colomb;
- NBE - Stockholm - H. Hamber and others;
- CIDE - Madrid - A. Ferrer and others;
- SVO - The Hague - H. Lodewijks;
- SLO - Enschede - P. de Bruijne, J. van Bruggen and others;
- LSW - Soest (FRG) - H. Schirp;
- NBGE - Helsinki - V. Lepistö and others;
- SCCC - Edinburgh - S. Brown, I. Barr and others;
- NCC - York - M. Davis, P. Watkins.

Moreover, international organisations are seriously interested (see paragraph 4) and we have had contacts with several other colleagues in institutes in FRG, France and others.

These first contacts and reactions gave us the impression that it would be worthwile to invest time, energy and money in this paper and in the organisation of a meeting in December, hosted by the SLO and SVO.

7. HOW TO PROCEED?

7.1 The December meeting

The aims for the December meeting are:
- to assess the feasibility of the consortium and its formula;
- to discuss and develop ideas about the consortium (by discussing this paper and other points), the formula and the programme for 1990 and 1991;
- to reach agreement about further proceedings.

7.2 Proceedings

Some ideas for further proceedings are:

a. To write a more definite version of this paper.

b. To investigate and analyse working schemes and budget plans of institutes and organisations in order to select the most suitable topics for the work of the consortium. As an alternative, we could select some topics of which we already know that they suit the aims of the consortium without further analysis. The advantage of this procedure would be that we could have a quick start in 1990.

c. Arrangements have to be made for several practical matters that have to be dealt with in the starting period, for example:
   1. Arrangements must be made with regard to the consortium's legal status.
   2. Relationships with the OECD and especially with Unesco, the Council of Europe and the European Commission have to be further developed.
   3. Financial matters (budgetting, fundraising, etc.) have to be examined and settled quickly and carefully.
   4. With the help of our networks, Unesco and the governments of European countries other potential members must be approached. We shall have to decide whether or not the consortium should include members from both the north/west/central and south/east of Europe. In our opinion the first thing to do is to start to invest in the consortium and organise workshops and training seminars. The best way to do this is to invite those members of the consortium who have already established contacts and for whom financial investments pose no serious problems. It would therefore probably be advisable to start with the western and southern European countries during the first three years of the consortium. This is a purely pragmatic approach, however. It could also be decided to put one member of the consortium in charge of establishing a consortium with members from eastern Europe as well. We think that a further elaboration of the contacts with eastern countries could have advantages in a professional, ideological and cultural-political sense.
   5. Setting up the secretariat.
   6. Contacts with governments in some countries about:
      - membership;
      - financial support;
      - co-ordination.

d. A founding conference has to be prepared; perhaps for the summer of 1990 and possibly simultaneously with the first workshop for staff of member institutes. We might also consider using the founding conference of the council as an information exchange conference with presentations by the institutes (resulting perhaps in a first

booklet). Practical matters concerning venue, time and organisation have to be discussed.

e. A provisional small executive committee (five members?) must be formed to do some preparatory work for the founding conference and other things (although we would prefer to divide the work between the people who will attend the meeting in December 1989).

f. A provisional working and budget plan for 1990-1992 has to be prepared.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have chosen for a rather elaborate presentation of our ideas concerning the consortium. We made this choice in order to enable the participants of the December meeting to understand fully what we have in mind. Furthermore we want to check the feasibility of the formula, the practical arrangements that have to be made, and the relationships between them. We believe that the formula and its realization in terms of practical arrangements are extremely important issues to discuss and to decide upon at the beginning of the consortium. Otherwise it might happen that general points are discussed in the council and the executive committee again and again.

However, this elaborate presentation of our ideas does not mean that we are absolutely certain about every point. In the text we have tried to indicate this. We do hope that we shall have a professional discussion about the ideas here presented and any other ideas put forward by other participants at the December meeting.

Practical information and the agenda for the meeting will be presented separately.

We send this discussion paper to the invited participants for the scheduled meeting of November 1989. This makes it possible to discuss it within the institutes and with other people as well.

We also send the discussion paper to other institutes and organisations and we ask these colleagues for their comment and their ideas about participation.